



Effective Solutions To Reduce The Phenomenon Of Delayed Marriage In Arab Societies

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Abstract:

This research entitled: "Effective Solutions to Reduce the Phenomenon of Delayed Marriage in Arab Societies" addresses one of the most pressing familial issues afflicting our Arab society, namely the phenomenon of delayed marriage. This issue is particularly concerning as it affects the youth, who represent the backbone and strength of society, pivotal in its construction, progress, and achievements. They are relied upon to address various challenges and bear heavy burdens, prompting us to delve into this topic. The research aims to explore the phenomenon of spinsterhood among females and bachelorhood among males, examine its implications, and propose effective solutions to mitigate its negative impacts on our Arab societies.

Keywords: Solutions, Delayed Marriage, Spinsterhood, Arab Societies.

Introduction

Research Text

someone who sees through the reality of families in our Arab societies notices some strange phenomena prevalent within them, undoubtedly causing a weakening of their cohesion, shaking their pillars, and tarnishing the purity of their essence. Foremost among these phenomena is the phenomenon of delayed marriage for both genders, which heralds the spread of immorality, the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, moral decay, and the exacerbation of psychological disorders among the youth. This is manifested through the spinsterhood of females, referring to the age at which a woman exceeds the socially expected age of marriage or when her feminine characteristics start to diminish, reducing her attractiveness to men and diminishing her chances of childbirth, accompanied by hormonal, psychological, and nervous changes,¹ and Also, the prolonged state of bachelorhood, defined by Michel Blanc as: 'a legal social status concerning individuals who do not have marital ties'."²

Due to the severity of the consequences of this phenomenon on individuals and societies, we deemed it necessary to research its nature and explore solutions to mitigate its effects and pains

¹ Fadila Arafat: The phenomenon of delaying the age of marriage (spinsterhood) in Iraqi society," an article published on: 16/02/2009 AD

www.alnoor.se/article.asp?id=41149, this website has been visited on: 26/05/2018

² Blanc, M. (1960), Introduction to Family Issues. Population, Family, Education, p. 146.

in Arab societies, attempting to uncover its causes, and elucidate the methods contributing to its treatment, through an introduction, two main sections, and a conclusion, as follows:

Introduction: In this, we will address the importance of research, its background, objectives, the scientific methodology adopted, previous studies, and its overall plan as follows:

Firstly, the Importance of Research and its Background:

The significance of this research, titled "Effective Solutions to Reduce the Phenomenon of Late Marriage in Arab Societies," lies in addressing a serious phenomenon that threatens the sanctity of the family institution. It deals with the delay in marriage for both genders, which if not urgently addressed and contained by all means, will strike the family, the primary cell of society, leading to its disintegration, the breakdown of its marriage institution, the spread of deadly diseases among its members, moral decay, the erosion of noble values, and the proliferation of vice and psychological illnesses, jeopardizing the progress and stability of Arab societies.

As for its background: It will study a new phenomenon within Arab societies, represented by the delay in marriage, by addressing the underlying causes regardless of whether they are material, social. The focus will be on finding effective solutions to uproot these causes or mitigate their spread in our Arab communities, thus cleansing them from the sorrows and woes resulting from this phenomenon on society as a whole, and particularly on the youth.

Secondly, Research Objectives:

A. Finding effective solutions to family problems in society, including the phenomenon of delayed marriage, which has afflicted many Arab societies, affecting the morals of their youth and jeopardizing the stability of their communities.

B. Highlighting the true causes of this phenomenon in Arab societies and elucidating the negative effects it entails, with the aim of dissecting and studying it to reach a comprehensive remedy for its adverse outcomes, thereby extending a helping hand to the youth and rescuing them from falling into the clutches of this phenomenon induced by the challenges of life.

C. Correcting some misconceptions prevalent among many young people, which may lead to reluctance towards marriage, such as painting an unrealistic picture of the supposed knight in shining armor, and similar idealizations that are difficult to achieve in the reality of everyday life.

Thirdly, the scientific methodology employed in the research:

In this study, we will utilize both descriptive and analytical approaches that align with the nature of the research. We will use the descriptive method to describe the phenomenon of delayed marriage and to describe the proposed solutions to eliminate or alleviate it. Additionally, we will use the analytical method to analyze the content and substance of the texts and facts presented in the research, examining and expressing opinions on them with the aim of reaching a comprehensive solution and effective treatment for this prevalent phenomenon in our Arab societies in recent times.

Fourthly, previous studies:

These studies encompass various aspects, such as the delayed age of marriage and its social effects. Notable examples include Norah Ali Obaid Al Zaabi's study, which focused on the causes of this phenomenon and its social repercussions in the Emirati society, among others. Additionally, Khaled Al Jrais's study delved into statistics related to unmarried individuals, discussed the concept of spinsterhood, its causes, prevention methods, and treatment techniques, ultimately proposing polygamy as a solution. However, our research aims to provide a more comprehensive

examination of various solutions scattered throughout this research to effectively address or mitigate the widespread phenomenon of delayed marriage and singledom in both young women and men.

Fifthly, research plan:

This topic will be approached through an introduction, four main sections, and a conclusion. The introduction will highlight the importance, background, objectives, scientific methodology, previous studies, and overall plan. The main sections will address material across four topics, each containing several branches. The first topic aims to reduce materialistic causes of the phenomenon, such as housing crises and unemployment, while the second focuses on social causes like combating mixed marriages and promoting collective marriages.

Finally, the conclusion will summarize the key findings and recommendations.

First section: Reducing Material Causes

We will address this through the following branches:

First Branch: Mitigating the Housing Crisis: It is undeniable that one of the prominent obstacles hindering the youth from marriage in our Arab countries is the housing crisis they face. This is due to the scarcity of housing units in some countries or their availability at exorbitant rental prices that do not correspond to the income of a young person at the beginning of their professional life, if fortunate enough to secure employment. This leads to a reluctance to marry, resulting in thousands of unmarried women and men, which signals a danger to the continuation of the human race and the purity of society. Therefore, it requires finding solutions to eliminate or alleviate this crisis in our Arab communities, including:

Firstly, allocating a portion of the "poor fund" in the Zakat treasury to solve the housing crisis for young people preparing for marriage. Islamic jurists have categorized those who do not own housing, and are housed with their spouses, under the category of the poor who are eligible to receive Zakat to provide them with suitable accommodation, even if it requires a considerable amount of money.³

Furthermore, I believe that if Zakat funds are insufficient, resorting to regulating a tax, known as housing assistance, imposed on the wealthy, deducted from their specified taxes on their wealth and commercial activities, would serve to remind them of their social and charitable responsibilities towards the youth of their society and to rescue them from the perils of bachelorhood and spinsterhood. In fact, some jurists like Ibn Hazm have made it an obligatory duty upon the wealthy in every country to contribute to meeting the needs of the poor in their society. Moreover, state laws may compel them to do so if Zakat funds are inadequate in providing for their livelihood necessities, such as food to alleviate hunger, clothing to cover their nakedness, and housing to shelter them from the rain and shield them from the heat of summer and the glare of the sun and the eyes of passersby.⁴

Secondly, working on launching housing projects for the benefit of young people preparing for marriage. These projects would be financed jointly, with the young person contributing a portion of the housing cost. If unable to do so, they would be provided with the opportunity to obtain interest-free loans from non-usurious banks, with long repayment terms. If this is not feasible for the young person, then the funds would be provided from the state's resources, Zakat funds, or donations from benefactors. It is imperative to include a housing quota for unmarried women in

³ "Adel Al-Awa: Family and Marriage Update, p. 47"

⁴ "Ibn Hazm: Al-Muhalla, Vol. 6, p. 156"

all housing programs across our Arab countries, as owning a home may encourage marriage proposals and marrying them.⁵

Second Branch: Necessity of Providing Employment Opportunities for Unemployed Youth: By unemployment, we mean the absence of productive employment opportunities for those capable of working.⁶ Undoubtedly, unemployment is one of the main reasons for the delayed marriage among both genders, leading to bachelors and spinsters. A unemployed youth who cannot find a means to sustain his life cannot afford the financial burden of setting up a household, which requires additional expenses. Consequently, they refrain from marriage, contributing to the singleness of thousands of women who often miss the opportunity to marry. Therefore, it is imperative for all state institutions to rise to the challenge of providing solutions to eradicate or alleviate the problem of unemployment among young people preparing for marriage. This can be achieved through the following mechanisms:

Firstly, allocating a portion of Zakat funds to combat unemployment: Zakat is a fundamental resource in resolving societal problems by allocating a portion of it to address unemployment. Arab countries should include a certain percentage in their governing laws and regulations concerning Zakat distribution, specifically aimed at addressing unemployment due to its profound impact on societies and nations. This includes deterring marriage, resulting in numerous bachelors and spinsters and hindering divine norms, as well as contributing to psychological and behavioral disorders among society members. Therefore, it is imperative to enact legislation specifying a certain percentage of Zakat funds aimed at mitigating unemployment. If eligible recipients are employed within a year or two of receiving Zakat funds, it is commendable. The Sudanese experience serves as a model, where 35% of Zakat funds are allocated to mitigate unemployment by purchasing craft tools, industrial machinery, and providing grants in the form of capital for the unemployed.⁷

Secondly, providing effective technical support and free consultations to unemployed youth: Providing free technical support and effective consultations to unemployed youth is equally important as financial support. This enables them to unleash their potential, refine their skills, and transfer knowledge, preparing them for a sustainable source of income. Offering free technical assistance and consultations helps equip unemployed individuals with the necessary qualifications and training to successfully enter the job market,⁸ which they might not afford otherwise. This provides them with a stable income, enabling them to establish households, thereby rescuing our youth from involuntary bachelorhood and our young women from perilous spinsterhood.

Thirdly, Contributing to Financing Projects for the Unemployed: Both the state and society bear significant responsibilities in funding projects for the unemployed in general, and specifically for

⁵ "Abdul Hakim Asaaba: Spinsterhood Threatens Arab Families - Causes, Effects, Solutions - p. 141-142"

⁶ "Mohamed Abdullah Mghazi: Unemployment and the Role of Endowment and Zakat in Confronting it - Comparative Study - p. 16"

⁷ "Ahmed Majzoub Ahmed: Jurisprudential Issues from the Reality of the Sudanese Experience, p. 351"

⁸ "Ibrahim Al-Bayoumi Ghanem: Objectives of Islamic Law in Charitable Work - A Comparative Civilizational Perspective - p. 69"

young people preparing for marriage. This involves providing them with funding for their projects, ensuring their success, and contributing to their sustainable growth, aiming to keep them away from the frightening specter of unemployment, which leads to suffering and pain, including the inability of young people to form families, resulting in waves of bachelors and spinsters. Therefore, funding projects for this youth category, who are the hope and strength of the nation, is imperative.

Imam Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "Whoever is a merchant, baker, perfumer, or money exchanger should be given a portion of the Zakat corresponding to their trade... or if he is a landowner, he should be given what is sufficient to buy land or a share in land that would suffice for him permanently."⁹

Fourthly, Activating the Role of Zakat Bank Employees: Zakat bank employees are those responsible for collecting and distributing Zakat to its rightful recipients. This role undoubtedly opens the door to real job opportunities by including a category of unemployed individuals preparing for marriage, allowing them to work in the Zakat institution and funding their salaries through a genuine source that supports the creation of such positions.¹⁰

Imam al-Mawardi (may Allah have mercy on him) said regarding the role of Zakat bank employees and those responsible for it: "Allah has made their rewards in the Zakat wealth so that nothing is taken from the wealthy other than Zakat, and they are paid from their portion similar to their wages."¹¹

Undoubtedly, including some educated unemployed graduates in the collection, calculation, and distribution of Zakat contributes significantly to alleviating the severity of the unemployment problem. This problem often acts as a barrier for young people in establishing their own families, necessitating the singlehood of our youth and spinsters in Arab societies.

Fifthly, Utilizing Some of the Zakat Funds in Investment Projects for the Benefit of Zakat Recipients: Undoubtedly, employing some of the Zakat funds in investment projects for the benefit of Zakat recipients will play an effective role in addressing the unemployment problem, especially among young people. Often, the ownership of these projects is transferred to their rightful recipients, those for whom they were established. This contributes to reducing this problem and may even eliminate it by creating new channels for Zakat distribution, allowing the recipients to own these projects. This undoubtedly provides them with employment and income, facilitating the formation of families and thereby mitigating the crises of singlehood and spinsterhood in our Arab societies. It has been mentioned in a decision by the Islamic Fiqh Council that: "It is permissible in principle to utilize Zakat funds in investment projects that end with the ownership of the eligible Zakat recipients or are under the supervision of the authorities responsible for collecting and distributing Zakat, provided that it is after meeting the urgent needs of the recipients and ensuring sufficient guarantees to avoid losses."¹²

⁹ "Al-Majmu': Explanation of Al-Muhadhab, Vol. 6, p. 181"

¹⁰ "Mohamed Abdullah Mghazi: Unemployment and the Role of Endowment and Zakat in Confronting it - Comparative Study - p. 158"

¹¹ "The Sultanate Rulings. p. 156."

¹² "Resolutions of the Islamic Fiqh Assembly, Fatwas of the Third Session, held in Amman, Jordan, during the period from 8 to 13 Safar 1407 AH."

In addition to the aforementioned solutions to the unemployment problem, which acts as a barrier to building happy marital lives, it is imperative for the state to encourage the employment of the unemployed by intervening to finance their projects. This can be done through imposing a work tax on both commercial and industrial profits, regulating a union tax on workers under the guise of unemployment insurance, establishing an unemployment assistance fund, the proceeds of which are used to alleviate unemployment, especially among young people.¹³

Sixthly, Granting a Range of Privileges to the Unemployed Individuals Preparing for Marriage by the State: Among these:

1. Encouraging the unemployed to cultivate and own fallow land: Fallow land is land that has no owner and is not cultivated.¹⁴ Islam has directed its followers to revive such land to benefit from its produce and to encourage them to do so, the one who revives dead land by owning it after reclaiming it is rewarded, as stated in the saying of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): "Whoever revives dead land, it belongs to him."¹⁵ This is with the caveat that the land intended for revival is not owned by anyone and is not under state control. It is also important to note that the land should not be left uncultivated for more than three years, as it may be reclaimed by the ruler if it remains unused.¹⁶

and the conclusion is: Reviving fallow land is considered a means of earning money, adding value to wealth accumulation, and owning land, ultimately eliminating unemployment. This encourages the workforce to acquire land, providing valuable solutions to the unemployment phenomenon, which is a major cause of the singlehood of our sons and spinsters of our daughters. These positive effects resulting from reviving fallow land undoubtedly contribute significantly to driving development forward and eliminating the problem of spinsterhood by providing job opportunities for those preparing for marriage who have ventured into these lands and turned them into lush gardens after they were barren and desolate.

2. Allocating portions of land to some of the unemployed:¹⁷ Indeed, Allah has blessed our Arab countries with vast expanses of land. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Algeria, or Sudan boast land areas the size of continents, and Allah has endowed their lands with extraordinary fertility that yields wealth for their cultivators. Therefore, it is within the state's power to allocate some of these lands to those who will cultivate them, especially young people preparing for marriage, by granting them ownership if they cultivate and demonstrate the effectiveness of their work. Alternatively, the land can be leased to them, as practiced in some Arab countries like Algeria, through a lease contract for a period of forty years in exchange for an annual fee.¹⁸ This experience has proven its effectiveness and success, as many unemployed individuals have become agricultural investors, providing employment for dozens of young people in their projects. Some of them have become pillars of support, relied upon to assist young people in fulfilling half of their religion and actively participating in solving the problem of delayed marriage. However, it is worth noting that the ruler has the right to expropriate or reclaim part of the allocated land if it is not utilized fully, as demonstrated by the incident involving Umar ibn al-Khattab and Bilal ibn al-Harith.¹⁹

¹³ "Shibli Badran: Education and Unemployment, p. 86."

¹⁴ "Ibn Juzayy: Jurisprudential Laws, p. 367."

¹⁵ "Al-Bukhari: Sahih Al-Jami', Book of Almuzaraa, Chapter: 'Reviving Dead Land', 2/823."

¹⁶ "Ibn Hajar: Fath al-Bari, 5/18-19."

¹⁷ "Abu Yusuf: Al-Kharaj, p. 74."

¹⁸ "Article 4 of Law 10-03, issued in the Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Issue: 46, Year: 47, issued on 08 Ramadan 1431 AH / 18 August 2010 AD, p. 5."

¹⁹ "Al-Bayhaqi: Al-Sunan Al-Kubra, Book: Reviving the Dead Land, Chapter: 'Whoever cuts off or leaves barren land without cultivating it', Hadith number: 11050, 6/149. And Al-Hakim: Al-Mustadrak, Book of Zakat, 1/561. Al-Dhahabi commented on this narration saying: 'Al-Bukhari cited it through

All of this falls within the scope of valuing work, eliminating the problem of unemployment, the economic development potential of work, and the cooperation and collaboration it fosters within society. By absorbing the ranks of the unemployed, who, if their energies are stifled, pose a burden to their nation, because it is widely recognized that work is a source of enrichment, while idleness is a waste and a cause of corruption.

Third branch: Establishing financial funds to assist young people in marriage: The idea of establishing charitable marriage funds in Arab societies is one of the pioneering ideas in combating the phenomenon of late marriage. These funds are highly effective in providing financial support for building families in our Arab societies, making them one of the important pillars in addressing the delay in marriage for both genders. Without a doubt, this necessitates calling for facilitating the establishment of such funds and surrounding them with a set of laws that ensure the success of their noble mission, without restricting their resources but rather opening them up to all contributions. These funds derive some of their revenues from various sources such as the Zakat fund, which is considered one of the main resources of their budget. It bears the burden of contributing to addressing some of the deep-rooted problems in society, foremost among which is assisting financially disadvantaged youth in completing half of their religion, thus safeguarding society from the spread of spinsterhood and bachelorhood resulting from the poverty of young people and their lack of resources.

Furthermore, the revenues of the public treasury are among the most important resources that were spent on fulfilling the needs of Muslims. Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, (may Allah have mercy on him), used to call out to the people every day, "Where are the poor? Where are the debtors? Where are those seeking marriage?"²⁰ to provide them with money to alleviate their hunger, pay off their debts, or help them get married.

From the foregoing, it is evident that it is necessary to allocate a portion of the revenues of the public treasury to purify society from vice and protect it from immorality by assisting the needy in marriage,

In compliance with what Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated, that a man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and said, "I have married a woman from the Ansar." The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) asked, "How much did you give her as a dowry?" He replied, "I gave her four pieces of silver."²¹ The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) then said, "Four pieces of silver? It is as if you are carving silver from the surface of this mountain. We do not have anything to give you, but perhaps we will send you on an expedition in which you will gain something."²² This confirms the responsibility of the authorities in combating the phenomenon of delayed marriage by removing financial obstacles for needy youth to form righteous families in society.

We also do not overlook the voluntary charity, which serves as another source for this fund, especially since it represents the widest avenue of spending. There are no limits to it, and for many Muslims, voluntary charity surpasses the obligation of Zakat. They believe that Zakat is unavoidable, and they are responsible and accountable for it. Voluntary charity is the broad

Nuaim bin Hammad, and Muslim through Ad-Darqutni. This hadith is authentic and they did not include it." Al-Dhahabi: Al-Talkhis 1/561."

²⁰ "Ibn Asakir: History of Damascus, Vol. 45, p. 194. And Ibn Kathir: Al-Bidaya wa Al-Nihaya, Vol. 9, p. 200."

²¹ "The Uqiyah contains 40 Dirhams, meaning that 4 Uqiyahs equal 4×40 , which equals 160 Dirhams. And the Dirham weighs 3.12 grams, so this dowry would be $160 \times 3.12 = 499.20$ grams of silver."

²² "Musnad: Sahih Al-Jami', Chapter: Recommendation to look at the face and hands of the woman for the one who intends to marry her, 4/142."

gateway that enables Muslims to embrace the values of hastening to do good deeds and acts of charity.²³

I say: A contemplation of the charitable spending system in Islam reveals that it does not limit itself to obligatory spending alone. Rather, its noble values call for supporting it with additional voluntary spending to cover what obligatory spending may not suffice due to the widespread need and poverty. Hence, Islam encourages its followers to engage in voluntary spending as it provides a broad platform for instilling positive values in souls and illuminates the path of fostering social solidarity, benevolence, compassion, and generosity.

This results in a society characterized by the values of solidarity, sacrifice, compassion, and giving, where everyone lives happily under the embrace of Islamic values filled with joy, love, solidarity, and brotherhood. These values place societies endowed with them at the forefront of leadership and sovereignty among nations, bearing witness to their excellence and leadership.

In addition to that, supporting the marriage fund with the proceeds of endowments is considered one of the most magnificent manifestations of spending in Islam and one of the most beautiful forms of social solidarity. Indeed, endowment is considered a great door among the doors of benevolent loans, compensating for the calamities, afflictions, and poverty suffered by distressed families.²⁴

We say: Observing the historical trajectory of endowments reveals its significant role throughout history in establishing the values of social solidarity. It has provided exemplary models in consolidating charitable work by filling significant gaps, especially in the realm of family building and facilitating marriages. Indeed, historical records show that endowments have allocated portions of their funds for the marriage of young people, extending to providing jewelry and clothing worn during celebrations and events.²⁵

Thus, after mobilizing financial resources for charitable marriage funds, their charitable work begins by assisting young people intending to marry in completing half of their religion, either through financial support or by providing easy loans to both genders planning to marry, with repayments scheduled over long periods. This encourages young people to marry, thereby addressing or alleviating the phenomenon of delayed marriage in our Arab societies.

Furthermore, there is no harm for these funds in our Arab countries to benefit from some pioneering experiences of charitable marriage funds in our Arab societies, among which is the experience of the Emirati Marriage Fund. The main purpose of establishing it was to contribute to increasing marriage rates among Emirati citizens. Its activities began in 1993 with the aim of encouraging young people to marry by providing them with financial assistance. This assistance amounted to 70,000 dirhams in the first marriage, along with significant grants upon entering into a second marriage. Additionally, it contributed to organizing mass weddings, which served as a means of exempting prospective couples from many burdensome costs, thus reducing the risks of spinsterhood and bachelorhood in Arab communities. Similarly, there is the experience of the Kuwaiti Marriage Fund, established by a group of businessmen and supervised by charitable associations of Kuwaiti citizens. They established it in recognition of the danger posed by the

²³ "Mahmoud Muhammad Al-Babli: Money in Islam, p. 90."

"Mahmoud Ahmed Mahmoud Mukhlis: Aspects of Earning and Spending Money in Light of the Quran, p. 237."

²⁴ "Muhammad Al-Sadiq Afeefi: The Islamic Society and its Financial and Economic Philosophy, p. 70."

²⁵ "Mohammed bin Abdul Aziz bin Abdullah: Endowment in Islamic Thought, Vol. 1, p. 256."

phenomenon of delayed marriage on society, with a capital of five million Kuwaiti dinars. Their aim is to provide consultations, financial assistance to the needy, and to secure wedding halls for their weddings.²⁶

Fourth branch: Reducing the phenomenon of extravagance in dowries and exaggeration in wedding luxuries. There is no doubt that extravagance in dowries leads to severe consequences, such as an increase in unmarried individuals and spinsters. This deviates from the natural course and impedes one of Allah's laws in the universe. It also leads to the emergence of diseases and ailments that were not present in our ancestors. Additionally, it contributes to sexual repression-related illnesses, prompting young people to seek alternative outlets for their desires, often leading them to indulge in immoral activities. To illustrate, we can refer to the study conducted by Emirati researcher Nora Ali Obaid Al Zaabi titled "Delaying Marriage and its Social Effects," spanning 116 pages. The study sheds light on the reality of Emirati youth facing overwhelming marriage expenses compared to their monthly income, which is approximately 7,000 dirhams. When considering marriage, they find themselves burdened with expenses like dowry, wedding preparations, venue rental, wedding attire, invitations, photography, honeymoon, amounting to nearly half a million Emirati dirhams. This financial burden discourages young people from marriage, leading to the proliferation of unmarried men and women, resulting in societal deviation and moral decay. It forces them into debt, leading to stress, anxiety, depression, and marital breakdowns.²⁷

Furthermore, the high cost of dowries leads to the emergence of other types of relationships that contradict the principles of our religion, as well as the customs and traditions of our Arab societies. Some of our youth resort to these relationships due to the extravagance in dowries and the heavy expenses associated with marriage in our Arab reality. A careful observer of this painful reality finds it burdened with responsibilities that weigh heavily on those seeking marriage. For example, in Algeria, after presenting the dowry, a young man finds himself obligated to bear additional costs that exceed his monthly income, even if he is fortunate enough to have a job. He is expected to provide seasonal gifts, provide the bride's mother with a considerable amount of money, and pay what is known as "al-jariyah," which includes gifts of gold, precious clothing, and perfumes, often surpassing the amount of the dowry itself. In addition to all this, there are expenses for renting the wedding hall, wedding banquet costs, and the dinner for the bride's family, for which they are given cash or gifts, and the list goes on. All of this leads young people to refrain from marriage, ultimately resulting in the spinsterhood of our daughters in our Arab societies.

In the face of this excessive extravagance in dowries and wedding expenses, which has resulted in the problem of delayed marriage in our Arab societies, it was necessary to search for suitable solutions, including:

Firstly, working through visual, auditory, and written media to encourage the facilitation of dowries: This can be achieved by highlighting the ease of dowries during the era of the early charitable centuries, aiming to emulate their practices. During that time, the dowry could be a simple iron ring, a piece of wool, teaching verses from the Quran, a handful of food, or a wooden stick. This is evidenced by the texts of the purified Sunnah, such as the Prophet Muhammad's saying to those who could not afford a dowry, "Seek, even if it is a ring made of iron,"²⁸ and when

²⁶ "Abdul Hakim Asaaba: Spinsterhood Threatens Arab Families - Causes, Effects, Solutions - p. 59-60, and 65."

²⁷ "Al-Zaabi, Noura Ali Obeid: Delayed Marriage and its Social Effects, p. 35-38, and compare with: Abdul Hakim Asaaba: Spinsterhood Threatens Arab Families - Causes, Effects, Solutions - p. 81-83."

²⁸ "Al-Bukhari: Sahih Al-Jami', Book of Marriage, Chapter: The ruler as a guardian, Hadith number: 5135."

he advised Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) upon his marriage to Fatimah (may Allah be pleased with her), saying, "Give her something," and when Ali replied that he had nothing, the Prophet Muhammad said, "What about your (Hutama) shield?"²⁹ He also said to another person, "I marry you to her for what you have memorized of the Quran."³⁰

Secondly, activating the juristic opinion permitting the deferral of paying the full dowry or part of it: It is customary in dowries to be immediate, but it is permissible to defer it or defer part of it. The Hanbalis have concluded that deferral is permissible, and if a deadline is set, it ends with separation, either through death or divorce.³¹

I say: There is no doubt that the idea of deferring the payment of the dowry or part of it to the woman intended for marriage, so that this dowry is a debt described in his obligation until facilitated, or in the event of divorce or the occurrence of the calamity of death, will undoubtedly have a significant impact in encouraging young people to marry, thereby ending or reducing the severity of the problem of delayed marriage in our Arab societies.

Thirdly, addressing the phenomena of extravagance, luxury, and excessiveness prevalent in our marriages: Many of our people deviate from the Prophetic guidance, burdening themselves beyond their means. We see them competing to bring luxurious cars to wedding processions and preparing various types of extravagant foods. Some even spend exorbitant amounts on renting wedding halls and hiring loud music bands. It is necessary to address these negative phenomena, which hinder many young people from completing half of their religion. This can be done by emphasizing the prohibition of extravagance and wastefulness and highlighting the Prophetic guidance in such situations. An example is the modest wedding feast of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) upon his marriage to Safiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her). Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated: "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) held a feast between Khaibar and Madinah for his marriage to Safiyyah bint Huyayy. I invited the Muslims to his wedding feast, and there was no bread or meat. He ordered that leather dining sheets be spread out, and dates, dried yogurt, and clarified butter were placed on them, and that was his wedding feast."³²

Fourthly, seeking the assistance of people of intellect and wisdom from the scholars in finding effective solutions to eliminate negative aspects of extravagance. Their intervention often has a positive impact, as seen in some Algerian regions where their wise leaders and scholars have collectively set limits on wedding expenses, which both the wealthy and the less fortunate adhere to equally.

Fifthly, establishing a series of charitable markets specifically for selling wedding necessities at reduced prices. Undoubtedly, the purpose of creating these charitable markets is not to generate profit but rather to facilitate access to marriage essentials and supplies for those intending to marry at minimal costs. These markets may sell these items for less than their actual value, with benefactors covering the financial difference in the item's price. This undoubtedly serves as an

²⁹ "Al-Bayhaqi: Al-Sunan Al-Kubra, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Recommended amount in the dowry, 7/134-135. And the price of this Hududian armor was four hundred dirhams. Abu Dawood: Sunan, Edited by: Shuayb Al-Arna'ut - Muhammad Kamel Qara'billi, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Regarding a man entering upon his wife before paying her dowry, Hadith number: 2125. The editors said: Authentic Hadith."

³⁰ "Al-Bukhari: Sahih Al-Jami', Book of Marriage, Chapter: Marriage based on the Quran without a dowry, Hadith number: 5149."

³¹ "Ibn Qudamah: Al-Mughni, Vol. 8, p. 21."

³² "Al-Bukhari, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Taking concubines, and whoever frees a slave girl then marries her, 9/126."

incentive for young people to proceed with completing half of their religion. Thus, these markets have contributed, even if to a small extent, to resolving the prevalent issue of delayed marriage in our Arab communities.³³

Sixthly, attempting to implement the idea of marriage through installment payments: This concept originated in Saudi Arabia and was proposed by the Shariah marriage official in Jeddah, Mr. Ahmed Saeed Al-Omari. He emphasized that the proposal stems from the logic of reducing the costs of dowry and marriage, which are estimated in the Saudi society to be around 77,000 Saudi riyals. These expenses are often borne by the groom and pose a significant burden on those with limited income, whose salaries are less than 1,500 riyals. They are unable to establish marital homes. Those who apply for this scheme only pay the dowry for their marriage, while the installment marriage project, supported by charitable investors and businessmen, facilitates the installment payments for housing, furnishing, and finding suitable partners for each other. This contributes to solving the problems of celibacy, spinsterhood, high dowries, as well as alleviating the suffering and troubles of young people.³⁴

The second section: Reducing social factors

We will address it through the following branches:

First Branch: Reducing the prevalence of mixed marriages: Exaggeration in the requirements of marriage is a major cause of spinsterhood and bachelorhood among many girls and boys. This is because the young man seeking marriage tends to choose the easier and less costly path, finding it in foreign girls. This leads him to refrain from marrying a girl from his own country who shares his religion, culture, and customs, thus leading to spinsterhood.

Additionally, we witness in our living reality marriages between the sons of our country and foreign women, especially among those studying abroad, who are attracted to Western life. They crown this by marrying foreigners, hoping to settle permanently in that host country. Added to these are those thrown by illegal immigration into the lands of exile, as they find no solution to their illegal status except seeking refuge in mixed marriages, unaware of its grave consequences on the daughters of their homelands, who are plagued by spinsterhood due to the irresponsible actions of these young men.

Based on the above, it is imperative to stand against the spread of the phenomenon of mixed marriages, which has been one of the main factors contributing to the spinsterhood of girls in our Arab societies. This can be achieved through the following measures:

First: Holding seminars, lectures, printing booklets, and pamphlets to raise awareness about the dangers of mixed marriages on the religion of the children and the chastity of society.

Second: Having a set of conditions between the authorities responsible for sponsoring students and the sponsored students, which the sponsored student signs. One of the clauses of these conditions is the necessity of the student's return to their homeland after completing their studies, and prohibiting their engagement with a foreign girl. If they violate this, it results in the breach of a penalty clause against them, demanding them to reimburse the sponsoring entity for the

³³ "Tawaba Nur al-Din: Media and its Role in the Emergence of the Phenomenon of Delayed Marriage and Spinsterhood, an article published in Al-Maiar magazine, Issue 22, Vol. 2, p. 696."

³⁴ "Abdul Hakim Asaaba: Spinsterhood Threatens Arab Families - Causes, Effects, Solutions - p. 148-149."

expenses incurred on them, along with other consequential penalties, which may prevent them from obtaining a job equivalent to the degree they obtained in their country.

Third: Introducing some incentives for intra-national marriage, meaning marriage to a fellow citizen. For example, contributing a certain financial percentage to the costs and burdens of marriage for those who marry one of their fellow citizens, while denying it to those who marry a foreigner. This incentive will have a significant impact on encouraging young people to marry fellow citizens who share their religion, customs, and traditions. Undoubtedly, this will contribute to reducing the bachelorhood of males and the spinsterhood of females, or at least mitigating its impact on the youth of our Arab societies.

Second Branch: Valuing Mass Weddings: Mass weddings in some Arab societies are considered a social system, justified by the presence of social, demographic, environmental, and economic factors. They result in peace of mind and comfort for those intending to marry, immense joy for their families, and profound happiness for their community. This contributes to reducing the phenomenon of late marriage among both males and females in the society, shielding them from immorality, and purifying the community from deadly diseases that undermine its noble values.³⁵

Furthermore, mass weddings derive their religious legitimacy from the principle of Unrestricted interest (maslaha mursala),³⁶ which emphasizes extending assistance to the members of the same community. Through mass weddings, disparities dissolve, and the spirit of cooperation, solidarity, and unity among Muslims prevails. These noble values, although not explicitly stated, are inferred from verses such as: "Help one another in righteousness and piety, but do not help one another in sin and aggression"³⁷, "The believers are but brothers"³⁸, and "Hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together"³⁹. Considering these significant benefits and lofty principles, mass weddings serve as a social channel to combat the phenomenon of delayed marriage or alleviate its severity. Under its banner, rich and poor families unite, as the wealthy shoulder all the necessary expenses of the wedding, ensuring that the less fortunate do not feel the burden.⁴⁰

Third branch: Limiting adherence to outdated traditions and prevailing customs: A contemplation of the reality of spinsterhood in our Arab societies reveals the influence of customs and traditions. Many guardians harbor the idea of prohibiting the marriage of the younger daughter before her older sister, exacerbating the issue of spinsterhood. Consequently, there are two spinsters in the household instead of one. Additionally, the insistence on marrying within the tribe contributes to reserving girls for their paternal cousins since birth. Their motivation stems from preserving family wealth, especially real estate, which is often circulated among its children. The girl reserved

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"Abdul Majeed Ismail Al-Ansari: Women's Issues Between Islamic Teachings and Societal Traditions, p. 149."

³⁶ "Al-Maslaha Al-Mursal: It is a term used by jurists to refer to interests that are suitable for the objectives of Shariah, and it does not have a specific origin in consideration or cancellation. Jalal al-Din Abdul Rahman: The Ultimate Goal of Reaching the Minutes of the Science of Principles - The Different Evidence - p. 17."

³⁷ Al-Maida : 2

³⁸ Al-Hujjurat : 10

³⁹ El- Amrane : 103

⁴⁰ "Muhammad Nasser: The Bachelorhood Circle and its Role in Building the Mosque Community - p. 26-27, and 48. And Muhammad Qasim Hadboun: Foundations of Early Marriage, Al-Maiar Magazine, Issue 22, Vol. 1, p. 63-64."

for her paternal cousin may grow older while awaiting this reluctant suitor, who often breaks free from this tribal obligation, leaving her hanging. All these considerations are entrenched in the class and ethnic divisions in our societies. Girls do not marry those who suit them in terms of religion, morals, and piety, but rather those who receive less praise, glorifying false tribal loyalties. Therefore, we say: With the spread of such customs alien to our religion and lenient Islamic values, we unintentionally contribute to the plight of our daughters and their spinsterhood.⁴¹

We say: How many spinsters have these bad customs and outdated traditions left in our Arab societies! This necessitates sounding the alarm from all active parties in society to play the leading role in finding solutions capable of eliminating them or reducing their severity. This can be achieved by taking necessary measures, some of which we will present as follows:

Firstly, establishing training courses directed at parents to highlight the sanctity of their daughters' guardianship and the desirability of marrying them off early. "Guardianship" refers to the restriction and control exercised by some parents over their daughters by rejecting suitors who propose to marry them, citing reasons such as the younger daughter not marrying before the older one, the suitor's inadequacy, or concerns about financial support or household duties. This behavior often leads to forfeiting the father's guardianship and the court replacing him in arranging her marriage, as he is considered unfit, as stated in the saying of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him: "The Ruler is the guardian to those without a guardian."⁴²

Here I say, what deficiency is greater than removing the father's guardianship over his daughter and handing it over to the authorities due to his recklessness and lack of prudence in his actions? Conversely, we hope that parents will work to marry off their daughters early so they do not miss the opportunity to get married due to advancing age.

Secondly - Counseling and clarification to prevent forcing girls into marriages they have not prepared for and do not desire, especially since "the father has no right to interfere with her property if she is mature except with her permission, and her consent is greater than her property. So how can he interfere with her consent while disliking it and her being guided..."⁴³. There is no need for this coercion except for trivial reasons, such as being from their tribe or their cousins having more rights over them than strangers, and the girl often dislikes it. What kind of marriage is this? Based on coercion rather than mutual consent and harmony from the outset, indicating that its fate is undoubtedly discontinuation, and even if it continues, it would lead to a life of hardship and poor relations between spouses.

Thirdly - Utilizing medical directives that highlight the dangers of cousin marriages on the health of offspring, and spreading awareness, especially in rural areas, to promote health literacy among parents who consider marrying their daughters within their tribe or to their cousins as an inevitable fate.

Conclusion: It contains the most prominent results and recommendations reached.

First - The results obtained: And here are the most important ones:

⁴¹ "Abdul Hakim Asaaba: Spinsterhood Threatens Arab Families - Causes, Effects, Solutions - p. 88-89, and p. 103."

⁴² "Al-Tirmidhi, Sunan, Book of Marriage, Chapter: No marriage without a guardian, and he said this is a Hasan hadith, 2/280-281. And Al-Darimi, Sunan, Book of Marriage, Chapter: Prohibition of marriage without a guardian, 2/137. And Ibn Majah, Sunan, Book of Marriage, Chapter: No marriage without a guardian, 1/605. And Sheikh Al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned it in Irwa' Al-Ghalil and authenticated it, 6/243."

⁴³ "Majmoo' al-Fatawa, Vol. 32, p. 25."

A - The necessity of saving the ladder of values from collapse and moral decay resulting from the spread of the phenomenon of delayed marriage, which leads to the destruction of virtue and the spread of immorality, such as adultery, rape, spiritual emptiness leading to suicide, terrorism, and violation of honor and sanctities.

B - The necessity of involving all segments of society in eliminating deadly sexual diseases resulting from not fulfilling desires in lawful ways, by finding suitable solutions to eliminate or reduce the obstacles that lead to the emergence of the phenomenon of delayed marriage, which acts as a stumbling block in facilitating marriage for young people in Arab societies.

C - Working on establishing banks, clubs, and charitable funds that have a long arm in assisting young people in completing half of their religion by marriage.

D - Activating the role of community institutions in reducing the phenomenon of delayed marriage among both genders in our Arab societies.

Second - Proposed recommendations: And here are the most important ones:

A - The necessity of activating the role of charitable organizations in reducing the phenomenon of delayed marriage among both genders, by accelerating their approvals, facilitating their work, and facilitating their communication with benefactors and business owners in order to contribute to providing financial assistance to young people approaching marriage in order to overcome the difficulties and obstacles standing in the way of their formation of the holiest societal institution, which is the family.

B - Working on convincing people to establish endowment institutions dedicated to marrying needy young people, while regulating the allocation of a certain percentage of zakat funds for the same purpose.

C - Establishing official and private institutions specializing in family counseling, with the task of guiding young people on sexuality, raising awareness among them about the virtues of early marriage, and highlighting the disadvantages of delayed marriage at individual, familial, and societal levels.

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